

## Buffalo County Mutual Aid Association -MEETING MINUTES -

Amherst: Glen Brown  
Buffalo County Sheriff: Neil Miller, Dave Butler  
Elm Creek: None  
Emergency Management: Darrin Lewis  
Gibbon: None  
Good Samaritan: None  
Kearney: Walt

Kearney PD: None  
Miller: Randy John, Wes Quail  
Pleasanton: None  
Ravenna: Don Zimmer, Tim Lammers  
Shelton: Wayne Witte  
Guests: None

Meeting called to order by Vice President Glen Brown.

MINUTES -- Previous meeting approved as presented.

PROGRAM -- None

OLD BUSINESS -- None

NEW BUSINESS --

It was reported that the earliest Fire Reporting training is March 10<sup>th</sup> 2007, it was unknown at the time if Jeff Davis had accepted this date. It was decided to wait until the next meeting for further updates from Jeff.

A radio update was requested; Darin Lewis reported that no actions have been taken on the purchasing of new radios at this time. This is due to the requesting and reporting tool has not yet been completed by the state. It is supposed to be ready sometime after the Communications Conference in North Platte January 31<sup>st</sup>.

Neil Miller pointed out that that after the Ice Storms and the Pager troubles that we all had we may want to try and get additional and different pagers. The problem is that the fire departments have a variety of different pagers and some of them do not have the ability to have AA or AAA batteries used in them to keep them charged. Walt pointed out that the Motorola Minitor 3's and 4's would take a regular battery but the new minitor 5 pagers will not. Walt pointed out that even though the new Minitor 5's do not take a regular battery the batteries that they do have will last up to 4 and 5 days. And Kearney Fire purchased a second battery for their Minitor 5 pager. Minitor 5 pagers will also tell you the battery life as well. So you know when it is getting close to being needed recharged. Darrin reported that we may not be able to change out radios for pagers as he did not believe that pagers were on the authorized purchase list of the 2006 Homeland Security Grant.

Neil discussed the communication problems we had during and after the ice storm. At one point all communication was lost with Miller. There were no landline phones, no cell phones, and the Dawson County tower is responsible for the paging. The Dawson tower did not have generator power and still does not have generator backup. While there was no communication to the town of Miller and the Fire Department, it was requested that Amherst and Elm Creek cover all Fire / Unit calls for Miller. It was also pointed out that just because there were pagers that didn't mean you would have a good response to a fire or unit call as a lot of fire fighters do not respond to a call until they hear the siren sound. This is for a variety of reasons but what was stated is that none of the smaller fire departments have generator back up; and because of this, the sirens do not sound when the power goes out. Many of the fire departments are now looking at generator back up for their fire halls and sirens.

Neil reported that the Hands tower had lost 1 communications antenna, and that the Kearney tower had lost 2 antennas. Walt had asked if this is why Kearney Fire had some interference on the frequency; Neil believed that it was and that the problem should be fixed within the next day or two.

It was reported that at the time of the meeting Hands tower was still running on generator power and that the Sartoria tower was still down due to no back up power at that location. It was feared that the interoperable communications tower west of the Law Enforcement Center was going to come down due to the weight of the ice build up. Businesses and the entire block was evacuated and blocked off for a day and a half.

The County Highway department had lost communications for 3 days due to a broken antenna caused by the weight of the ice and the wind.

Neil discussed how well the conference calls worked to communicate with the Emergency Operations Center and the rest of the communities.

Darrin commented that there was good cooperation with all departments and agencies during the emergency; and that everyone did a good job taking care of each other, and checking on the citizens of their communities and the surrounding areas of their communities. Everyone worked well together and this is what it takes to get through an emergency like this.

Darrin reported that 7 generators had been acquired through the state for each of the towns for health and safety usage, i.e. running wells, lift stations, sewers, and shelter. Those generators are now being requested to be returned to the Buffalo County Highway Department.

It was asked of each of the fire departments to go back and figure out what the biggest problems were for each of the communities during the Ice Storm and what it is we can do to prevent those problems from occurring again. It was also stated once this is done and it is determined that funding is needed to correct these problems, now is time to go to the boards.

It was noted that the City shop in Shelton burned during the Ice Storm, and that Gibbon was called for mutual aid. Again the pagers were a problem because the fire fighters did not respond to the page for one reason or the other, and the sirens did not sound due to the power outage.

Walt asked the group the size of each of the Fire Departments. The average size of the departments in Buffalo County is 30 to 35 members at each department.

Neil discussed the Fire Bar phones and felt that this would help with some communication problems as this would be a dedicated line to specific members of each of the communities. At this time Ravenna, Gibbon, Elm Creek and Shelton do not have the fire bar phones. Neil will check into this to see if the phone companies will do this and report back at the next meeting.

#### MEMBERS REPORT--

Amherst-- None  
Buffalo County Sheriff-- None  
Elm Creek-- Will be having a pancake feed on the 27<sup>th</sup> from 5-8 at the Fire hall.  
Emergency Management-- None  
Gibbon-- None  
Good Samaritan-- None  
Kearney FD-- Stag on the 11<sup>th</sup> at Fire hall, Fries etc. Each department is invited.  
Miller-- None  
Pleasanton-- None  
Ravenna-- None  
Shelton-- hosting a state sponsored EMS patient assessment training date and time was unknown.  
President—Jeff Davis

NEXT MEETING -- Next meeting will be on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at 8:00 PM - location Kearney Fire Station 1.  
Meeting adjourned-- 21:25

Respectfully submitted Darrin Lewis